DIALOGUES OF THE DEAD:

In Imitation of

LUCIAN, and the FRENCH.

I. Between *Jevon* and the *Whale*.
II. *Æsop* and an *English Lady*.
III. *Butler* and *Tartufe*.
IV. *Hobbs* and Poet *Bays*.
V. Cardinal *Richlieu* and *Anthony* Earl of *Shaftsbury*.
VI. *Clelia*, and Monsieur *de Scudery*.
VII. *Moliere* and a Lady.
VIII. *Ben. Johnson*, *Virgil*, Two Ladies.

LONDON:
Printed for *R. C.* and are to be Sold by *J. Nutt*, near *Stationers-Hall*. 1699.

To Her GRACE

The Dutcheſs of *Buclugh*.

MADAM,

YOUR Grace's Goodneſs to Diſtreſs is ſo well known, that it encourageth the Author to beg Your Protection to a Book which needs ſo conſiderable a one, being writ by one, who beſides all other Faults, is Poor; which I am afraid will prove as infallible an Argument with a great many to Rail, as it will with Your Grace to Defend, if there were any thing tolerable in it. I could enter here upon a Subject that would afford a large Field, the Praiſe which Your Grace ſo well de-

ſerves: But ſo many good Hands have undertaken it already, that it would be a boldneſs in a Pen that does not know whether it ſhall not be condemned, to meddle with a Work that is ſo well done already, and which I am ſo ſenſible ought to be ſo. It would be happy, if the Faults of my Book ſhould not make it as fit, as my Circumſtances do, never to acknowledge who writ it; and therefore that I may have ſomething to own, that will be for my Honour, I beg leave to ſubſcribe my ſelf,

MADAM,

Your Grace's

Moſt Humble and

Moſt Obedient Servant.

DIA-

DIALOGUES OF THE DEAD, &c.

DIALOGUE I.

Jevon. Whale.

Whale. WHAT art thou that cut'ſt ſo many Capers, and crieſt out ſo at the ſight of me?

Jevon. O, good Mr. *Fiſh*, don't ſpeak ſo big, I was ready to die at the ſight of thee before, and now thy great Mouth opens, I am out of my Wits for fear thou ſhouldſt devour me.

Whale. Why, thou ſilly Fellow, haſt thou forgot that we are both Dead, and I can't devour thee. Who art thou, prethee, that art ſo ridiculous? I think thou ſpeak'ſt like the People where I died.

Jevon. I know not where that was, but I was an *Engliſhman*, of no ſmall Fame upon the Stage, called *Jevon*; but I have conſidered ſince I came hither, that I made but a fooliſh

fooliſh Figure in being a Player, and am reſolved, if I can get ſome *Lethe*, to go back, and be a Lord of the Admiralty.

Whale. Thou art the ſillieſt Fellow that ever poor Fiſh met with; Wouldſt thou be a Lord of the Admiralty, and art frighted out of thy Wits at the ſight of a great Fiſh; why, I am nothing to what thou haſt ſeen at Sea, if thou art fit for that Employment.

Jevon. Ha, ha, ha! ſeen at Sea, why thou ignorant Fiſh, I never ſaw the Sea in my life.

Whale. How, didſt thou never ſee the Sea in thy life, and wouldſt thou be an Admiral?

Jevon. Why, thou ſilly Dog of a Fiſh, ſo much the better: I was ſo ſenſeleſs when I was upon Earth, to aim at underſtanding my part, and thought I could not Act it well elſe; but I find I was miſtaken, and am reſolved to go back and reform my Error, get to be a Parliament-man, and then I ſhall be a Lord of the Admiralty?

Whale. Are any of the places void?

Jevon. No, but I hear they will quickly.

Whale. What are they to be put out for?

Jevon. Miſmanagement.

Whale. What, then they are Seamen.

Jevon. No, I tell thee; how ſhould I hope to come in, if it had been the faſhion to put in Seamen?

Whale. Art not thou a ſilly Dog then, to ſay they are put out for miſmanagement, ſince it was known when they were put in they muſt miſmanage? Find another Reaſon.

Jevon.

Jevon. Yes, and so lose my hopes of Preferment; do thou find one who dost not aim at a place?

Whale. Not now, but I did before I came here, for I went on Shore a purpose to be a Charging-Horse for some Land-Officer, hearing of the extraordinary Fashions of the Country, but not having the Admiralty-Receipt of living out of ones Element, I died.

Jevon. Thou art a Fish of profound Ignorance; they need no such Receipt, for they never come near the Element, lest the Air of it should teach them a little Skill, and so unfit them for their Employment. But tell me however, why thou thinkst there must be a Remove?

Whale. They that are in, have swallowed little Fish enough, and must go off like me with two Tun of Whitings in their Bellies, and make room for others to fill theirs.

DIA-

DIALOGUE II.

Æſop. Engliſh Lady.

Lady. O, What ſhall I do? Where are all my Lovers?

Æſop. What would you do with more than one? Can you Marry them all?

Lady. No, but they might have followed me when I was married, if I had not come to this hideous dark place, where they can't be ſeen if they do.

Æſop. But you may hear the Effects of that following.

Lady. What was that?

Æſop. Laughter and Scandal.

Lady. What, you was one of thoſe ſcurvy Fellows who could get none of my Favours, though I was very liberal of them, and therefore rail at me.

Æſop. No: I was one of thoſe ſcurvy Fellows who knew 'twas in vain to hope for any Woman, and therefore hated you all beforehand; and had ſhewn my Malice, if your ſelf and Lovers had not ſpared me the pains, in ſinging your Praiſes without me.

Lady. Then you Lampoon'd other Women.

Æſop. No: A great many did like you, and ſome were out of my reach, ſo that not knowing where to fix, I applied my ſelf to Birds and Beaſts that did not vex me.

Lady. What, you are *Æſop* then?

Æſop. Yes.

Lady.

Lady. Thou mighteſt paſs for a Wit among Birds and Beaſts, but thou waſt a very fooliſh Fellow among Women if there were any in thy time like me; for thou wouldſt have helpt to encreaſe the train of Lovers, and be kindly uſed too, rather than leſſen the Equipage.

Æſop. If there were any, they were as hateful to me as I could be to them.

Lady. Nothing is ever hateful to Women of my Sort, but what does not admire us; nor any thing lovely but our ſelves.

Æſop. Then every thing that deſerves to be valued, goes without it among you, and the moſt nauſeous Part of the Creation is only loved; yet I am pleaſed with thee too, for being if it were poſſible a greater Contradiction to Love then my ſelf, which I did not think there could be.

Lady. Be my Lover then for that; I don't care what 'tis for, ſo thou wilt but Love me; for all that can be ſaid againſt me, does not afflict me like the Loſs of my Lovers.

Æſop. Let not that afflict thee, thou haſt not loſt one; for all thoſe Fellows thou bemoaneſt ſo, followed thee for the very ſame Reaſon thou wert pleaſed with its Vanity; they were incapable of Love, and being Beloved, and therefore were tranſported when they had found any thing Inſipid enough to receive them.

Lady. I would uſe thee like a Dog, if I could make thee Love me for telling me all this.

Æſop. I will fly thee now, leſt the Sympathy between my Body and thy Soul ſhould prevail in time.

DIALOGUE III.

Butler. Tartufe.

Butler. WHAT art thou that ſlid'ſt about more thin and empty than any other Ghoſt?

Tartufe. I am *Tartufe.*

Butler. I dont wonder then that thou art ſo Airy, for thou art nothing.

Tartufe. How! Thou wonder of Ignorance, am I nothing? I would have thee to know that thou art nothing in compariſon of me; I am Thouſands, I am to day a *Capuchin*, to morrow a *Franciſcan*, next day a very Godly *Quaker*; another, an *Anabaptiſt*. I am now a Church of *England* Man or Woman, that Faſts and Prays, and forgets Charity and Morality: Then a *Presbyterian*, who parts with a Church he owns to be without fundamental Errors, for the Name of *Sanctity*: And next, to ſum up all, I am a *Jeſuit*.

Butler. Why then I find my *Hudibras*, whom I thought nothing but a Phantom of my own making, is a very conſiderable Perſon; but I tell thee for all that, neither he nor thee are any thing but a Repreſentation.

Tartufe. Why, what are the Hypocrites we repreſent, but Repreſentations? And that ten thouſand times more ſilly then we; for when we are no longer ſeen nor read, vaniſh into nothing as we were before the Poet form'd us; but they muſt be ſomething in ſpite of their emptineſs.

Butler. Doſt thou not own now what I ſaid at firſt, That thou art nothing?

Tartufe. Why ſo I tell thee are the things I repreſent while they are on Earth, for they belong neither to God nor the World, in which they take more pains by half to buy Hell, than would ſerve to carry them to Heaven; ſo that they are nothing till the time comes when they will wiſh to be nothing.

DIALOGUE IV.

Poet *Bays*, And *Hobbs*.

Poet *Bays.* WHAT are you?

Hobbs. I am a parcel of Atoms that jumbled together by chance, and as you ſee formed a certain two-legged Animal, but a very conſiderable One for all that; the greateſt Philoſopher that ever was.

Poet *Bays.* O, I know you by your Vanity and Atoms, you are Mr. *Hobbs*; I am very much beholden to you, I learnt my Dance of the Sun, the Moon, and the Earth, from that of the Atoms; it pleaſed me, and ſlap it went down for my own.

Hobbs. To ſee the Emptineſs of this poor Fellow, to talk as if it were nothing but a Poetical Notion! I tell thee, Trifler, I am no Poet, but an infallible Philoſopher, and 'tis all True that I Taught.

Poet *Bays.* How is it True, now you find your ſelf here?

Hobbs. Yes that it is, I tell thee, fooliſh Poet, I dance the Hay among the Atoms, as you did

with the Sun, Moon and Earth, though I hate to have a *Jack-pudding* imitate my Dance.

Poet *Bays*. O, you may well be poſitive, if you was behind the Scene and ſaw it all contrived.

Hobbs. I tell thee I was; I ſaw the grapling Irons that hookt every thing together, and can tell to a Hair what will let them looſe again.

Poet *Bays*. This is rare indeed, you are as Good as one of my People in the Clouds, and may with them plead a Priviledge of not being bound to ſpeak Senſe.

Hobbs. Do'ſt not thou perceive that I ſpake more than ever was heard of. I demonſtrate every thing; which of your Religioniſts can do ſo? they have not ſeen the Things they ſpake of, and I have: What can you ſay to that?

Poet *Bays*. Who I? not one Word, 'tis all Fire and Flame, and all that, and I admire thee extreamly.

Hobbs. But now I think on't, Art not thou Poet *Bays*? I thought that had been only a Character of the Duke of *Buckingham*'s making, and not a real being.

Poet *Bays*. Why might not the Duke of *Buckingham* as well pretend to make a being, as you to deſtroy him who gave every thing being, and when you have done to make a World your ſelf?

Hobbs. I tell thee, I did not ſay I made it, I only knew how it was made.

Poet *Bays*. You might as well make it, as be poſitively ſure how it was made without divine Revelation.

Hobbs. I ſhall never forgive the Duke of *Buckingham* for making thee, thou art ſo troubleſom;

bleſom; have I not proved in my Writings, that there is no divine Revelation?

Poet *Bays*. Why then you have proved your ſelf in your Writings among your two-legged Beaſts, an Aſs, to meddle with proving the Creation of the World, which you can know nothing of? Come, come, turn Poet, and then all you ſay may paſs under Poetick Licenſe.

Hobbs. With what Face canſt thou talk thus to a Man of my Gravity and Wiſdom?

Poet *Bays*. That very grave Face and Beard will make thee hooted at here, where Impudence and falſe Reaſoning ſignify nothing but to make thee appear ten times more a Fool than if thou didſt not ſet up for a Wit with ſuch abominable falſe Ware.

Hobbs. Have I not told thee, That I affirmed nothing but what I could make out?

Poet *Bays*. Yes, but you have not made it good; pray Mr. Wonder of a Philoſopher, to whom *Lucretius* and all thoſe you ſtole your fooliſh Notions from, are but Aſſes, can you tell me, ſince you was at the Dance, what Atoms the Univerſal Notion of a God was compoſed of?

Hobbs. Why Fool, Did I ever deny that there was a God? I only ſaid, That it was below him to mind this Earth, and the Animals upon it.

Poet *Bays*. And how then, pray, did theſe Animals come to find him out, if he can't find them out, but be ſhut up ſo cloſe in Heaven, that the Atoms muſt needs be very ſubtil that could get in and out to bring News of him?

Hobbs. Has not another Philoſopher prove lately, that it may be found out by Reaſonin

and that Reaſoning it ſelf, and all the Faculties of a Soul that is called Immortal, are only the Effects of our Senſes?

Poet *Bays.* Methinks then he yields a great Advantage to the Senſes of thoſe Prophets, which were piercing enough to pry into ſo many future Ages.

Hobbs. Pho', ha'n't my Writings proved ſufficiently that we have only Peoples Word for it, and that it may be a Trick?

Poet *Bays.* Can you prove that all thoſe Millions who affirmed the fulfilling of Prophecies, did lie? for it will do you no good to ſay they might; it is not likely they did; and ſo the Probability, which is all you can pretend to, is againſt you.

Hobbs. O what ſhall I do? Here comes *Rhadamanthus.*

Poet *Bays.* O, I'le tell you what you ſhall pretend, to be my *Drawcanſir*, I can do no leſs than reſtore it when you need it; ſo much for you, and your one or two Fellows againſt Mankind; furniſh me with it as you did with the Dance.

DIALGGUE V.

Cadinal *Richlieu.* *Anthony* E. of *Shaftsbury.*

Rich. WHAT have we here, a walking Runlet! O'tis a Man with a Tap in his Side. What art thou?

Shaftsb. I am *Anthony* Earl of *Shaftsbury.*

Rich. I have heard of you, and am glad to ſee you, in hopes of hearing the Reaſons of a Po-

Policy that looks very ſtrange to me, That you who had no Religion, muſt all of a ſudden deſtroy your great Favour with the King, by declaring ſo fiercely againſt Popery, which you knew he had a Mind ſhould be quiet?

Shaftsb. I had my Reaſons to deſire being the Rabbles God, and there was no way like that.

Rich. You might have made a Noiſe againſt Popery, and pleaſed the Rabble without loſing the King by inventing that perſecuting Teſt.

Shaftsb. No, I could do no good with the Rabble, while they had a good Opinion of the Gentry and Nobility, which I durſt not attempt to take off, by ſpeaking publickly againſt them, and therefore was fain to deviſe this Teſt to make them ſuſpect them.

Rich. I can't underſtand how it could hurt any but thoſe who could not take it.

Shaftsb. Yes, it made People believe, that I who was known to have a Reach beyond the Common, found a general Inclination to Popery among them, when I thought there was need of exacting Oaths againſt it.

Rich. What do you make then of Coronation Oaths?

Shaftsb. The Nature of the Thing requires it; but whoſoever adviſes a King to Impoſe new ones, has a mind to have his Subjects believe he ſuſpects them to be leaning to what they are required to Renounce; for People are never required to forſwear what they hate, every one knowing that Nature is inſtead of a thouſand Oaths in making them forbear it.

Rich. Your Kings do not uſe to deviſe new Oaths, but your Parliaments impoſe new ones upon themſelves.

Shaftsb.

Shaftsb. 'Tis a ſign then, that they ſuſpect themſelves to want Courage, if not Will to refuſe what they Renounce, without it; did you ever hear of any that forſwore what they have no Inclination to? Does a Spendthrift ever forſwear Hoarding, or an Old Mizer throwing away his Money? Did ever any that never toutch't a Card, forſwear them? And how many that love them too well, do, to keep their Companions from the Solicitations which they fear ſhould prevail?

Rich. Well, you compaſt your End; you made the Subjects ſuſpect one another by your Teſt, and the King hateful to them all by ſhutting up the *Exchequer*; but pray what was the End of all this?

Shaftsb. That wearied out with Troubles, Diviſions and Miſmanagements, they might find the Want of ſo wiſe a Head as mine, and chuſe me for King.

Rich. O abominable! 'Tis pity but the King had known all this, when he heapt his Favours upon you.

Shaftsb. Why do you make ſuch an outcry at me? Is it not the Faſhion of all Favourites to give the Advice which they think moſt for their own Profit, without caring one Farthing whether they Ruin their Maſter or no?

Rich. Then all Favourites are Fools; do they not commonly fall with them, ſometimes firſt; and if they eſcape both, did ever any of them riſe upon their Maſter's Ruine, as I did upon the Greatneſs of mine, which I took ſuch pains to procure.

Shaftsb. It is not to be denied; however the Favourites come not to follow your Steps:

But

but methinks as clear as your Sight was, you did not give your Kings a true Idea of Greatness; for a Government which lies all in a single Man's humour, must certainly Ruine the Subject: And however Kings come not to reflect upon it till 'tis too late, their Greatness rises, sinks, and perishes, with the Prosperity of their People.

Rich. I did not form that Government as the best; but it was the best I could introduce then there; for one Arbitrary Prince was better than Hundreds, which was the Case then in *France*, every Nobleman being so: And I could not take away part of their Power, without taking all, for there is no doubt if it could have been done, but your Constitution is best for King as well as People.

DIALOGUE VI.

Clelia. Monſieur *de Scudery.*

Clelia. THOU villanous *Gaul*: Was it not enough that thy Nation once ruin'd *Rome* with their Swords, but thou muſt ſlander one of their Heroines with thy Pen, and ſay I was in Love?

Scudery. You *Romans* think it part of your Glory to pick Quarrels; I think, if I had uſed you as the Author of *Caſandra* did the Princeſs *Statira*, you might have been angry.

Clelia. What has he done to her?

Scudery. He has not only made her in Love, but in ſuch Diſtreſs for a Husband, that when ſhe was croſt in him ſhe loved, ſhe is reſolved to have one however, and gives her Hand to *Alexander*, while the imaginary Hero has her Heart.

Clelia. 'Tis barbarous beyond Expreſſion in him; but let her defend her own Quarrel, I have enough to do with my own.

Scudery. I can't imagine why you ſhould have any; have I not made a Hero for you, that deſerved you to the utmoſt? And is not the Deſign on both ſides Honour and Marriage? where is the Diſgrace of all this?

Clelia. No where, if it had been True; but your confounding my glorious Action with ſo many Lies, may make that queſtion'd as well as the reſt.

Scudery. By that Rule all Actions that ever have been done, Good, Bad, or Indifferent, may be queſtion'd as well as yours; for they are told with

with as many Additions and Alterations as they paſs through Hands.

Clelia. 'Tis much to the purpoſe to do great Actions then, if they are ſubject to ſo many Miſrepreſentations.

Scudery. Indeed, if they are done only for Vanity, they may chance miſs their Aim; though a clear Underſtanding will generally gueſs pretty right through all the Miſts that are raiſed about them.

Clelia. How ſhould they do that, unleſs there were certain Marks ſet upon Truth and Falſhood?

Scudery. From the Character of thoſe they are told of, and that of thoſe that tell them; though I generally judge moſt of the Teller, by the Story; for moſt People draw their own Picture upon it: In a Cobler's Hands it ſhall have the Air of a Cobler; in a Market-Woman's, of a Market-Woman.

Clelia. But my Story is in no danger of falling into ſuch Hands now; for being only recorded in Hiſtory, and your Romance, they will never hear of it.

Scudery. O, you are in a great Miſtake, for the Souls of a great many Market-Women in former days are got into Ladies in theſe; and all the Mean, the Spiteful, the Ridiculous Chat that was confin'd to the Market in your time, helps People to talk now, that muſt be ſilent elſe; nay, and makes them paſs for good Company too with thoſe that are not above their pitch.

Clelia. If they are all of that ſort, I don't care what they ſay.

Scudery. No, there is variety now, as there was always; and you may expect Juſtice in ſome places.

Clelia. But why do people tell a Story that has but one, with ſo many different Faces?

Scudery. Becauſe they put themſelves in the places of them they ſpeak of, and tell what they would have done if they had been there; if it falls into witty Hands, they will find a witty Meaning where perhaps there was none; if into ſilly ones, 'tis all over Nonſenſe and Folly immediately, let them have never ſo much Wit that acted it.

Clelia. Well, provided I have the Reaſonable on my ſide, the reſt may do what they will; And none but Fools as great as they that tell them, will hearken to the others, becauſe there is no diverſion in them.

Scudery. Yes, the Envious, who will find ſome in any thing that leſſens others.

DIALOGUE VII.

Moliere, Lady.

Lady. WHERE is my Woman? She ſhould have died with me; how does ſhe think I can ſet my Feet without her?

Moliere. I find you was Blind above that, that you can't perceive; Eyes are of no uſe here.

Lady. What ignorant Fellow are you that talk thus? I had Eyes above, and what ever you may think, very fine ones too, unleſs all the Beaus were miſtaken; and which is more, my Woman.

Moliere. Your Woman! What an Inſignificant thing do you make of your ſelf, if you could ſee, not to be the Judge your ſelf of what they were? Which was I believe as little capable of making Conqueſts as diſcerning.

Lady. Why thou pitiful mean Fellow! for ſuch to be ſure thou wert: Doſt thou think it became my State to judge for my ſelf? Let them who have no Quality or Money enough to keep a Woman, ſee with their own Eyes; and after having taken a great deal of Pains to know who is handſom or ugly, deſerving or undeſerving, be in the wrong at laſt.

Moliere. True, if every Ladies Eyes were like yours: But I always thought till your Ladiſhip better informed me, That Peoples Souls and their Ranks had generally agreed, and lookt for the Wit of a Ladies Woman in her Fingers.

Lady.

Lady. I wiſh my Woman were here to Anſwer thee.

Moliere. And pray if the Lady is ſo helpleſs, who muſt chuſe the Woman, for fear ſhe ſhould be ſo too?

Lady. Thou art wonderful Ignorant; as if all Ladies Women had not Wit enough to govern them: I am ſure none of mine ever fail'd, though ſome were greater Wits than others, and the laſt generally greateſt.

Moliere. Madam, let me entreat the Favour of you to return to Earth again with me; for without your Character, my Plays are Imperfect.

Lady. Who are you?

Moliere. I am *Moliere.*

Lady. And what do you make then of the Women in your Plays, that talk'd and laugh'd with their Maſters, when their Ladies had not Wit enough to do it?

Moliere. 'Tis plain enough what they are, Confident, Bold, Merry Wenches, who if they loſt that Place with offending, might get another, though the Ladies could not other Husbands and Fathers; and therefore let their Wit be never ſo much above their Women's, might not venture to ſpeak upon thoſe Occaſions: And yet I confeſs their Figure even ſo, is rather too conſiderable.

Lady. Not half enough; but as they are, I ſhould be glad of one here: Can you help me?

Moliere. No, they fell out with my Ghoſt long a go, and brought me before the Court; but if you will go back again with me, I will take care your own Woman ſhall die juſt when you do.

Lady.

Lady. Thank you, with all my Heart; come, let's go presently.

DIALOGUE VIII.

Virgil, Ben. Johnson, and Two *Eng. Ladies.*

Vir. WHAT makes all this Noise? O 'tis a Trump! Pray whose Trumpeter are you?

Ben. Jo. My own.

Vir. That is good Husbandry beyond what I ever heard of; but pray then, what great Officer are you besides?

Ben. Jo. I am *Ben. Johnson*, the Prince of Poets.

Vir. O, I have heard of you before, and thought you had been deserving enough not to need being your own Trumpeter?

Ben. Jo. You are in the right, I was deserving enough to have had all the World for my Trumpeters, if I had lived in an Age when Merit would hire any; but I did not, and therfore was forced to be my own.

Vir. Did your Merit get none? I am afraid then your Trumpet sounds False; there was certainly never any Age so unhapy to have none in it that could distinguish Right?

Ben. Jo. You are not *Radamanthus*, I hope, you are so nicely strict in the way of Speaking? What I said was according to the common liberty of Speech: When I said there were none that had Judgment enough to praise me, I meant in comparison of those who wanted it.

Vir.

Vir. O, I thought you meant ſo! And ſhould have thought too, you had never heard or read of any Age but your own, if ſome of your Plays did not ſhew to the contrary: Do you think all Ages were not alike for that? Was there ever any in which there was not ten thouſand Fools to one Judge?

Ben. Jo. You talk ſo of Judges, and require ſuch Smartneſs in anſwering, that I dare not ſay a Word more till I know whether you are *Radamanthus* or no?

Vir. I am *Virgil*, who you ſee, without being my own Trumpeter, have made a ſhift to find enough to bear up my Fame till your time.

Ben. Jo. That may ſhew you then, that all Ages are not alike; with how univerſal an Applauſe were your Works received; and how ſmall a ſhare had mine, which deſerved at leaſt as well?

Vir. Suppoſe you give your ſelf but your due: Did you live in my Time to know that? You do not find me indeed upon Record begging Praiſe, or hectoring for it: But ſhall I tell you where was the Difference, it was in the Men, and not in the Times: Never believe but that there were Millions in that and every Age ſince, who could not diſcern any Beauty in my Poems; but I was ſo far from being concerned for their Praiſe, that I ſhould have been frighted and look'd narrowly over my Works again to ſee where I had fallen low enough to pleaſe them; and if you eſcap't it in your Works, you muſt thank your Stars, and not your Skill; For the Fool muſt have a great

ſhare

ſhare in him who deſires any ſhare in the Fool, and 'tis not a ſmall one any where that prevails for Praiſe.

Ben. Jo. You may ſpeak big, who had an *Auguſtus* and *Mecœnas* on your ſide; but I was fain to write for the Fools, and could not get their Money, which I wanted, without their Applauſe.

Vir. You ſhould have writ according to their Capacities then, and made that an Excuſe for doing it ill; as I hear ſome of the Poets in your Nation do now.

Ben. Jo. Do you believe any Body that had a Genius, would proſtitute it ſo?

Vir. Not unleſs I ſaw him grumble and whine for want of their Praiſe.

Ben. Jo. Do not I tell you, I ſhould not have cared for their Approbation, if I could have had their Money without it.

Vir. You ſhould have been contented without both, or do ſomething for them, and not be ſo unreaſonable to expect that a Droll-Judge ſhould commend a good Play.

Ben. Jo. To ſhew you then that there was a Difference in the Times we lived in, I found my 'Count in it; when I praiſed my Plays, they lik'd them, though they did not before: You had to do with People to whom ſilent modeſt Merit is a thouſand Praiſes; but if, like me, you had dealt with them that underſtood nothing of it, you muſt have commended your ſelf, or they would never have known you deſerved it.

Vir. I would not have had them; I would have lived in my Cottage at *Mantua* firſt.

Ben. Jo. 'Tis eaſy to Philoſophiſe under the Sun ſhine of *Auguſtus* Favour; but I was all Poet, and no Philoſopher, and wanted good Sack, and the conveniences of Life, which I thought well gained with praiſing my ſelf to bad Judges, while my Writings did it to the Good.

Vir. I am afraid there was ſomething more in it than ſo; for you are uſing your Trumpet now to me, whom I ſuppoſe you will not rank among the very worſt Judges: But who are theſe?

1*ſt. Lady.* I am a Lady, that am pleaſed to think how happy I was in the World, to be born above theſe fooliſh Diſputes of Wit.

2*d. Lady.* O whither am I got! Am I among the Wits? Whither ſhall I fly to avoid the Infection? A Wit! Who would be a Wit?

Vir. You may ſtay ſafely; that very Fear ſhews you are abſolutely incapable of taking the Infection: But what are you?

2*d. Lady.* I am a Lady juſt come hither; but are you ſure there is no danger of catching this terrible Diſeaſe? I am all over in a Trembling; methinks I feel ſome of my Diſcretion gone already; I would not ſay a witty thing for all the World.

Vir. Take courage, Madam, you never will. But pray, if there is not too much Wit in giving a Reaſon for what you ſay, give me leave to ask, why you are ſo angry with Wit? And when the War between that and Diſcretion begun? For when I was upon Earth there was no being Diſcreet without it.

2*d. Lady.*

2d. Lady. O, the Contradictions that theſe Wits will maintain! Why there is, nor never was any being Diſcreet with it; a witty Man will rather loſe his Friend than his Jeſt, and never conſiders any thing.

Vir. This is new indeed! And pray what is a Diſcreet Man?

Lady. I cannot tell what a Diſcreet Man is; but a Diſcreet Woman is always taken up with Buſineſs, or finding fault with them that are not; and not in keeping fooliſh witty Company, or any other Diverſion.

Vir. A very fine Definition you have given of Wit and Diſcretion! A Witty Man, in your Senſe, is a *Jack-pudding* with a Sword by his Side, which he draws at every Body he meets, provoking them to do him what hurt they can; and a Diſcreet one, is an unfortunate Lump of Clay, who being incapable of taſting any Pleaſure, drudges on in his Pack-Horſe-Road, and never ſeeks the Refreſhment of any Diverſion, becauſe he knows he cannot taſte it.

2d. Lady. O dear Madam! Let us be gone from theſe Wits; do you hear what a vile Character he has given of Diſcretion?

Vir. No 'tis you that give it; I am as far from thinking a heavy, ſilent Sot, Diſcreet, as I am from thinking a prating Fool witty: I take Diſcretion to be firſt thinking Right, and then Acting accordingly; and Wit, to be putting thoſe Thoughts into Words when there is no occaſion for Action; for if both are not the Reſult of Thought, 'tis neither Wit nor Diſcretion, but Chance.

2d. Lady. Sure Mr. Wit you are Mad; why, a Witty Man never thinks, but is always talking; and a Diſcreet one never ſpeaks, but of Buſineſs, or to find Fault, and then his Reaſons are always full of Gravity.

Vir. There you miſtake again; 'tis not the Seriouſneſs which People reaſon with, but the Truth which gives them Weight: Which indeed a Man may with all the Gravity you require, wanting Spirits to do otherwiſe, yet do it Right; but then 'tis a Picture of Reaſon in dead Colours, which he would certainly give Life to if he could; neither is this any thing to your Purpoſe, for lowneſs nor highneſs of Spirits, are neither eſſential to Wit nor Folly, but common to both.

2d. Lady. I find you Wits are all Mad; I tell you, Gravity is Eſſential to Diſcretion, which you know nothing of.

Vir. You are once in the Right; Gravity is Eſſential to the Diſcretion which I know nothing of: For it is nothing elſe but dulneſs when it is without Wit; and if by chance it has any ſhadow of Diſcretion, that is all, and that may be gone too the next Minute, if any thing happens to give the Machine an irregular Turn, ſince it did not come from good Senſe, but Heavineſs.

Ben. Jo. Come Madam, take Heart-of-Grace, you ſhall be Diſcreet without Reaſon for all him; and I will make you Immortal in one of my Plays, if I can but drink of *Lethe*, and go back again.

2d. Lady.

2d. Lady. I will have nothing to do with you for a Wit, as you are too; I don't know what ſly Trick you may put upon me, under pretence of Friendſhip.

Ben. Jo. None at all, Madam; you ſhall have all the Ingredients that are neceſſary to making your Pudding, and it ſhall not be too coſtly neither.

1ſt. Lady. Come, come, Madam, he Mocks you; but I would have him to know, that we are above it; there is no Body would be at the trouble of being a Wit, if they had Money enough to have the *Indian* Woman, the Tire-Woman, the *Mantua*-Woman, the *Sempſtreſs* and the *Jeweller*, with them all Day; but for want of that agreeable Entertainment, they are fain to talk wittily, though I believe when they have got that ill Turn in their Diſcourſe, they would never be able to compaſs this Gentile one.

2d. Lady. Why Madam, you are as bad as a Wit; while you are diſpatching theſe People, you loſe the Time that ſhould be ſpent in talking of Houſwifry, and correcting your Neighbours Faults.

1ſt. Lady. No, no, don't miſtake your ſelf, that is one means of knowing our Neighbours Faults; and if it were but for that, and to talk over all the things they bring, how could one live without them? How would it be poſſible to maintain Diſcourſe a Viſiting? What an ungentile thing would it be to force Wit upon the Company, if one were ſo unfortunate to be troubled with it?

2d. Lady.

2*d. Lady.* I am of your Mind for that; but can't be reconciled to all thoſe unneceſſary People; you may buy your things Cheaper, and with leſs Trouble at the Shops.

1*ſt. Lady.* Yes, and ſo have no Body think me well dreſt, when I can neither ſay, I had my Mantua of ſuch a one, ſuch a one made it, and ſuch a one dreſt my Head.

2*d. Lady.* Why not, ſo all be well made, choſen and put on?

1*ſt. Lady.* As if that could be without them?

Ben. Jo. No, no, Madam, you are in the Right; if I can but get ſome of this *Lethe*, I will Immortalize both you and them.

1*ſt. Lady.* Ay, ay, ſo you ſhall, that will be putting your Wit to a right uſe, to write my Praiſes; you ſhall come to my Levee with the reſt, and prate among them; but you muſt be ſure to break off in the middle, if the Tire-Woman, or *Indian*-Woman begin to open their Lips.

Ben. Jo. That will be hard to obſerve.

1*ſt. Lady.* Nay, 'tis no matter; for I ſhall not mind you, when they ſpeak; but where muſt we find this *Lethe* now we have ſettled the Matter?

Ben. Jo. Virgil muſt inſtruct us, he underſtands this Place the beſt of any.

Vir. And what will you do, Madam?

2*d. Lady.* O, I will ſtay here, for Diſcretion makes People indifferent for every thing; yet now I think on't, I have a mind to go back, for it diſtracts me to think what a Confuſion there is among my Servants now I am not there.

Vir.

Vir. I thought what was your Indifference, that your Servants can rob you of it.

2d. Lady. Why may not I be Indifferent about Diverſions, Places, and all the Things that take up the Idle People, and yet be angry with my Servants? Why, that is part of my Diſcretion.

Vir. That is, 'tis part of your Diſcretion to be unmoved with every thing that is agreeable, and let your Servants take up your Soul.

2d. Lady. How take up my Soul, if they do things that 'tis impoſſible to forbear being angry at?

Vir. Yes, if they only can croſs your deſires; for nothing can make People angry, but what does that; Anger being only a more ill-natur'd ſort of Sorrow?

2d. Lady. Who do you think can ſee with Patience the Miſchiefs they do among their Things? Or the ſenſeleſs Miſtakes they commit?

Vir. They that do not think the breaking of a Glaſs the Ruin of their Family, nor have Underſtandings ſo little diſtinguiſh't from thoſe of their Servants, as to fear their Follies ſhould reflect upon them.

2d. Lady. If you go to that, Mr. Poet, I can take the breaking of a Glaſs with as much Patience as any body, and have been admired for it: But the Impertinence of Servants is not to be endured; one comes and teaſes me for more of one thing, another for more of another, to perform their Office.

Vir. Why don't you grant their deſires?

2d. Lady.

F150577
D13.73.5

2*d. Lady.* Becauſe they are unreaſonable.

Vir. Why ſhould their want of Reaſon afflict you, unleſs you love them?

2*d. Lady.* Becauſe 'tis troubleſome to me, they will take no denial, and make a Noiſe about my Ears that puts me out of my Senſes.

Vir. And why ſhould that Noiſe put you out of your Senſes, any more than the whiſtling of the Wind, or any other diſagreeable one, if it were as indifferent to you? But the Truth is, that as great Souls are almoſt always Calm, becauſe there is ſcarce any thing in the World high enough to reach them; yours enjoys the ſame Privilege from the contrary Extream, nothing is low enough to touch you, but your Servants, and you ſhew by your tranſport or rage at them, that if you had a taſte of any thing elſe, it would move you as much.

2*d. Lady.* I ſhould be a fine Fool indeed, if I could be convinc'd by a Wit; I will ſtay no longer in your ſcurvy Company.

Vir. I will ſtay no longer in yours, and that was the reaſon I ask'd whether you would ſtay or go; come, will you go?

Ben. Jo. Firſt Lady, Lead on, we follow.

FINIS.